



**Statement of Rep. Anna G. Eshoo
H.R. 3893, the Gasoline for America's Security (GAS) Act
(Protecting Public Lands)
October 7, 2005**

I rise in opposition to this Rule, which failed to make my amendment in order.

The underlying bill authorizes the President to designate federal lands that might be suitable for the construction of an oil refinery.

Once he has made a designation, the land must be leased for the construction of a refinery. The refinery would be permitted under expedited procedures with limited judicial review.

Although the manager's amendment requires the President to conduct an analysis of the suitability of the site, there is no obligation that he take that analysis into account before designating federal property as suitable for a refinery. There is NO requirement that there be an opportunity for citizen input.

To their credit, the sponsors of the bill have barred the president from designating lands the National Park System, the National Wilderness System and National Monuments.

Unfortunately, they failed to protect millions of acres of other equally sensitive lands, including areas within:

- The National Forests
- The National Wildlife Refuge System
- National Conservation Areas
- Wilderness Study Areas
- The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
- The National Trails System, and
- The National Landscape Conservation System

My amendment would protect these lands, which have been set aside for the American people and which have enormous intrinsic ecological and economic value.

Let me focus on one category of lands – 74 million acres of Wildlife Refuges left unprotected by this bill. (Each state has at least one Refuge.)

Just yesterday, Secretary Norton yesterday released a report called “Banking on Nature -- The Economic Benefits to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation.”

The report, which was released in anticipation of National Wildlife Refuge week (which begins this Sunday), touts the considerable impact the Refuges has on communities in the last year.

According to the report, Refuges attracted 37 million visitors in 2004, creating 24,000 jobs and producing \$454 million in employment income.

People visited the Refuges for a variety of recreational opportunities – from fishing to kayaking to bird-watching.

But who will want to come to a Refuge with a refinery?

And of course there will be damage if a refinery is built, according to the Government Accountability Office, “constructing, operating, and maintaining the infrastructure necessary to produce oil and gas can harm wildlife by reducing the quantity and quality of habitat.”¹

I can’t imagine why a president would want to clear the path for building a new refinery on Chincoteague Island, Virginia or in Arkansas’ CASH (spelled “Cache”) River Refuge where the long-lost Ivory-billed woodpecker has been rediscovered.

But I don’t see why Congress would want to give him the chance.

Vote against the Rule.

¹ August 2003, GAO report “NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES -- Opportunities to Improve the Management of Oversight of Oil and Gas Activities on Federal Lands